

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 003163

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CEN, IO/PHO, AND AF/RSA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/09/2014

TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [GT](#) [HA](#) [BY](#) [IV](#) [SU](#) [CF](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING
OPERATIONS IS GROWING

REF: A. USDAO GUATEMALA IIR 6 838 996 05 (DTG 061836Z
OCT 04)

[1](#)B. USDAO GUATEMALA IIR 6 838 9986 05 (DTG 031812Z
NOV 04)

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Hamilton, reason: 1.4(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In addition to deployment of a military police company to Haiti, the Guatemalan military has military observers in the Ivory Coast and Burundi, has finished training military observers for deployment to Sudan, and has promised to send a Special Forces company and a military police company to the Congo. The Guatemalan military leadership views participation in peacekeeping operations as a means to increase military professionalization, provide a revenue source for military modernization, and reinforce reorientation of the military away from internal security missions. Resource and personnel constraints may keep the Guatemalan military from fully realizing its ambitions for participation in international peacekeeping efforts, but we should applaud and support this trend whenever and however possible. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The October 2004 deployment of a company-size (70 man) military police contingent to join the UN Mission For Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH) represents Guatemala's second experience with peacekeeping operations (PKOs) in Haiti; Guatemala also participated in the 1994 Multinational Force and its UN successor. This contingent is primarily responsible for security of MINUSTAH headquarters. The Guatemalan military had been approached by the UN about sending an infantry battalion to Haiti in early 2005 as a replacement for the military police contingent (Ref A); current Guatemalan planning, however, only envisions rotation of the military police contingent in April 2005.

[1](#)3. (C) The Haiti follow-on contingent issue was intertwined with proposals to create a multinational Central American peacekeeping battalion that would include company-size contingents from at least Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. This idea has been discussed in meetings of the Conference of Central American Armies (CFAC), but has apparently encountered political difficulties in some of the member countries. With no more need for additional troops for Haiti, the Guatemalans are now exploring formation of a Central American battalion outside of CFAC auspices to avoid political and legal constraints related to CFAC sponsorship.

[1](#)4. (U) Guatemala's return to peacekeeping was spurred by two events: the October 2003 simultaneous creation of an Army peacekeeping operations school and a PKO section in the Operations Department of the General Staff; and, the November 2003 signing of an MOU between the UN and GOG, which committed Guatemala to the Standby List for PKOs. The first course in the PKO school began in January 2004; the school offers courses designed for various personnel participating in UN-led PKOs, such as military police, military observers, staff officers, and commanders.

[1](#)5. (SBU) The PKO school has just completed training of 15 military observers for future deployment to the Sudan; Guatemala currently has three military observers each in the UN missions in the Cote D'Ivoire (UNOCI) and Burundi (ONUB), respectively. Guatemala is also planning to send a 100-man Special Forces and a 100-man military police contingent to the UN mission in the Congo (MONUC) in early 2005. The mission of the Special Forces company will apparently include rescue of hostages.

[1](#)6. (C) In conversations with Embassy officers, Guatemalan Chief of the Defense Staff Major General Bustamante has made it clear that he sees participation in PKOs as an important vehicle for increasing the professionalization of the Guatemalan military. MG Bustamante noted that opportunities to work with more advanced military forces provide unequalled training opportunities for the Guatemalan military, and that the experience of equipping, training, and deploying Guatemalan forces to foreign theaters in itself provides valuable training.

[1](#)7. (SBU) The Guatemalan military leadership also views participation in UN PKOs as a funding source, albeit a modest one, for military modernization. Part of the UN funding will

go to enhanced salaries for the Guatemalan soldier but a portion will be paid directly to the GOG. The Guatemala military anticipates that these funds will be for modernization of the military, a line item in the GOG budget that is to be financed by sale of military property and/or foreign donations. (Note: Since the GOG has decreed that surplus military property will be donated to other Guatemalan national, departmental, or municipal entities, foreign donations or soft loans appear to be the only viable funding source for military modernization. End Note.)

18. (C) Comment: There are resource and personnel constraints facing full realization of Guatemalan ambitions for PKO participation. The Guatemalan military will be reimbursed by the UN for expenses in equipping its Haiti contingent but may face problems in advancing funds to similarly equip its units destined for the Congo, especially as it will be a larger contingent with a more complex and dangerous mission. Future commitments, including rotations, may face similar funding problems. On the personnel side, the current size of the Guatemalan military means that Guatemala may not be able to commit more than a battalion-size force to PKO participation, given the 1 to 3 ratio needed to support foreign deployments, as well as the fact that close to one third of the Guatemalan military is currently involved in supporting joint police-military security patrols. (The Guatemalan military has proposed to at least partially address the personnel issue by not counting deployed peacekeepers against the official personnel strength ceiling - an idea that may face opposition from civilian authorities, human rights groups, and/or international donors.)

19. (C) Comment continued: Left unspoken, but presumably in the minds of at least some officers, increased participation in PKOs would constrain the GOG's ability to increase the number of military personnel involved in joint police-military patrols. The Guatemalan military clearly chafes at this role, believing it is a drain on scarce military resources and worrying about fallout from possible military involvement should there occur an incident involving use of excessive force. The military is also concerned that joint patrols represent an open-ended commitment, and one that will grow larger given - in the military view - the incompetence of the police.

10. (C) Comment continued: Guatemala's interest in and commitment to a growing role in international peacekeeping is very positive. We should encourage it politically and support it logistically (as contemplated in the release of frozen MAP funds) whenever possible.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
HAMILTON